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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR CA/FPP; CA/VO/L/A; DS/ICI/CR/VF

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TAGS: [CVIS](#) [KFRD](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: DIPLOMATIC VISA FRAUD BY NIGERIA MFA UNCOVERED

1. SUMMARY: U.S. Customs and Border Protection began intercepting travelers at ports of entry on March 31, 2006 who had received their A or G diplomatic visas in Abuja through diplomatic notes containing fraudulent information. These notes were genuinely issued by the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs but the travelers paid corrupt officials within the government to be included on these genuine notes. Post has reviewed visa issuances since December 2005 and has identified cases to be revoked. Post is assisting in a criminal investigation initiated by Nigerian authorities. Lagos will provide an FSN fraud investigator to assist in contacting all affected applicants to ascertain their true status. END SUMMARY.

2. On March 31, 2006 post was notified that CBP had intercepted multiple travelers with fraudulently obtained A-2 and G-2 visas. The Department revoked their visas and the travelers departed via expedited removal. Post investigated the cases in question and determined that the visas were issued on the strength of Diplomatic Notes received from the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since the beginning of April, post is aware of nine other A or G visa cases intercepted by CBP while the traveler is en route.

3. Post takes these cases very seriously and has taken the following steps in response:

- Abuja ConOffs along with the Lagos-based Country Fraud Prevention Manager have identified 91 cases from December 2005 through the present that are suspect and potentially fraudulent. 69 of these have been forwarded to CA/VO/L/A for revocation. The other 22 will follow by COB April 24.

- Lagos' Anti-Fraud Unit will provide FSN investigative support beginning the week of April 24 to assist with verification of credentials for the 91 suspect cases.

- Post is assisting with an investigation into public corruption at the MFA that was initiated by the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crime Commission. The EFCC is Nigeria's premier anti-corruption body and says they will place a high priority on this case. The EFCC became aware of this case when applicant AYOZIEUWA, Patrick (18 July 1968, Nigeria) filed a complaint with them regarding the A-2 visa he had paid for but did not receive from the corrupt officials he had bribed. EFCC regarded this as an individual incident until post notified them of the other confirmed cases. Interestingly, Mr. AYOZIEUWA appeared at the embassy on April 11, 2006, as a walk-in to see the RSO and passed information which was primarily actionable for the Drug Enforcement Administration.

- Post is applying additional scrutiny to all Diplomatic Note cases received from the MFA. ConOffs are paying particular attention to first-time travelers, abnormal purposes of travel, applicants traveling officially on regular passports, and travelers who seem unusually young for their purported positions. Post has significantly increased the number of applicants called in for personal interview, and is referring applicants that are unqualified for A or G visas to Lagos to apply for a B1/B2 visa.

4. The DCM plans to demarche the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Permanent Secretary level sometime during the week of May 1. Post will request an explanation for the fraudulent diplomatic notes, and the development of a reliable mechanism to verify the bona fides of Nigerian official travelers. The demarche was delayed at the request of the EFCC so that they could detain and question officials from the consular and protocol office at the MFA.

5. Post appreciates the constructive involvement and assistance of the Department and the National Targeting Center in these cases.

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